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ABSTRACT

This guidebook is one in the Target Topic Series developed to highlight issues and concerns related to effective community education operation. It is intended for the community educator and community education advisory council member who want to discover ways in which community education can carry its message to the people in the school district community. A pretest covers material discussed in the guidebook. The guidebook discusses the importance of public relations, describes how the public relations process works, and outlines methods and techniques for communicating with the public. The first part of the guidebook takes a philosophical approach and provides an overview of the public relations process. The second part deals with specific tools used in communication, including how to develop writing and speaking skills and how to improve publications. A posttest repeats the pretest questions. A glossary is provided. (YLB)

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TARGET TOPIC SERIES

CARRYING THE MESSAGE

A GUIDEBOOK FOR

COMMUNITY EDUCATION PUBLIC RELATIONS

MARTHA L. STANLEY

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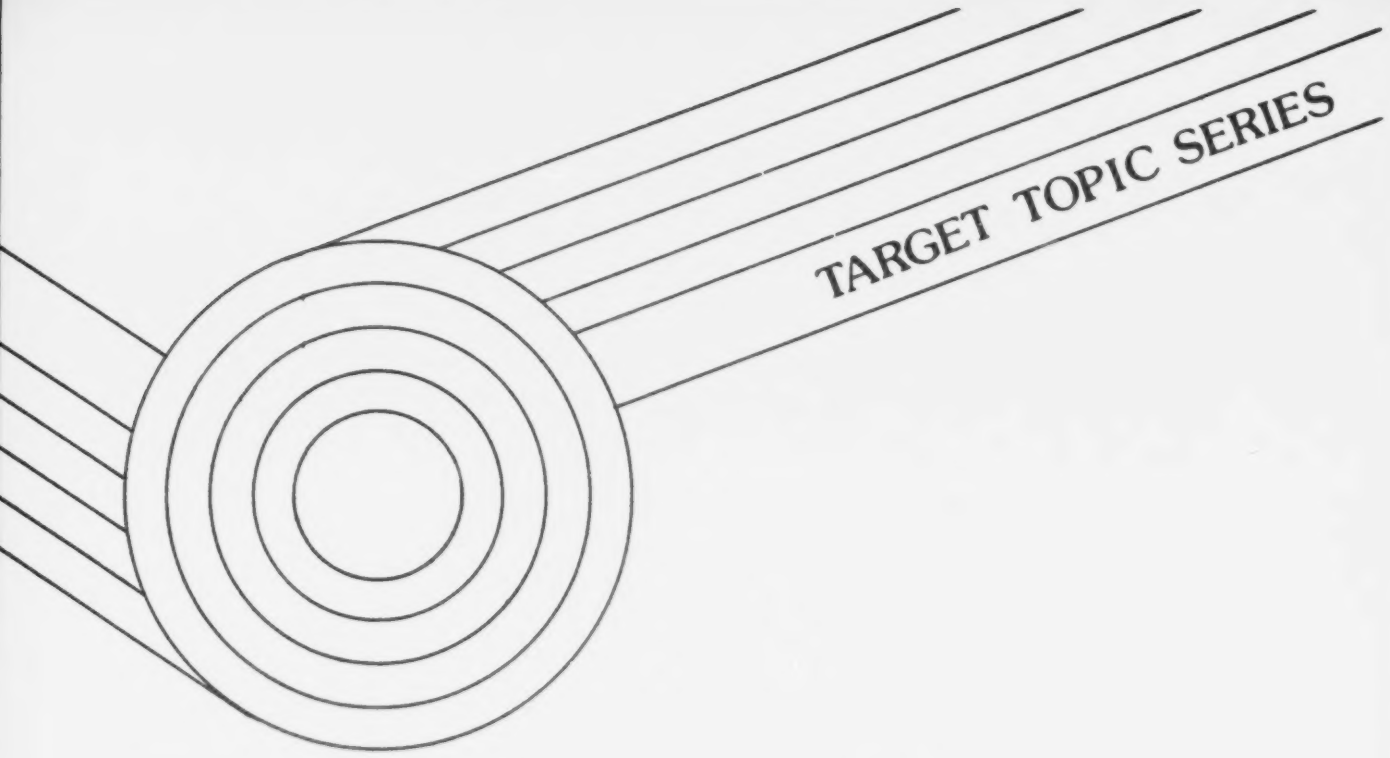

THE TARGET TOPIC SERIES

The Target Topic Series is a set of guidebooks developed for community educators and Community Education advisory council members. The guidebooks discuss many topics related to effective Community Education operation: Council Skills, Community Assessment, Planning, Public Relations, Finance, Programming, Legal Questions, Staff Development, Community Involvement, Coordination and Cooperation, and Evaluation.

The Target Topic Series is designed to highlight the skills or the issues that relate to each subject; and presents an overview which should be of value to the reader.

The Series was developed in response to an identified need for materials to aid and enrich the Community Education process in the state of Minnesota, particularly for areas that do not have ready access to inservice opportunities. The materials are applicable to Community Education programs throughout the country and are available for national distribution.

The Target Topic Service is written by staff members of the Community Education Center at the College of St. Thomas and by Community Education professionals in Minnesota. The series is distributed by the Community Education Center at the College of St. Thomas.

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FOREWORD

Community Education is effective only when it can relate to the people, the groups, and the organizations in the community. Community Education must listen to and hear the needs and problems of the community. Community Education must talk to, and talk with, everyone in the community. Community Education must create the system and provide the forum through which the providers and receivers can communicate.

This guidebook has been written to help you understand the vital role public relations plays on the stage of community life. It will provide an impetus for community educators and other school administrators to work together to develop a public relations process that is truly a conduit between them and the community.

John Fredericksen, Community Education Director in North Branch, Minnesota, contributed many ideas and suggestions for the content of "Carrying the Message." We are grateful to him for sharing his time and his knowledge.

INTRODUCTION

This guidebook is for the community educator and the Community Education advisory council member who want to discover ways in which Community Education can carry its message to the people in the school district community. Community Education plays an important public relations role in the school district by lessening the distance that sometimes exists between the school and the community.

The guidebook discusses the importance of public relations, describes how the public relations process works, and outlines methods and techniques for communicating with the public. The first part of the guidebook takes a philosophical approach and provides an overview of the public relations process. The second part deals with specific tools used in communication including how to develop writing and speaking skills, and how to improve your publications.

"Carrying the Message" is written to help you realize the importance of public relations, both to your program and to the entire school district. It is also written to provide you with the skills that are needed to put the public relations process into practice.

WHAT DO YOU KNOW?

(The following questions cover the material which is discussed in this guidebook. We suggest you answer them before reading the text. Your answers will point out your present level of knowledge and will make you aware of areas to which you should pay particular attention.)

1. What purpose does the public relations process serve?

2. Why is public relations important to the future of education?

3. Why is Community Education the natural vehicle for the public relations efforts of the school district?

4. Why is it important to have a formal policy for public relations?

5. What are the components of an assessment for public relations?

6. What background work is needed in order to write public relations goals?

7. Who are the "publics" that Community Education serves?

8. How does the planning process apply to setting up a public relations program?

9. Why should a public relations program be evaluated?

10. How does your image and the image of your staff and council affect public relations?

11. What is "internal" public relations and why is it important?

12. How can other groups carry the Community Education message?

13. What are the major problems that people face when they write?

14. Why is it important to develop a personal relationship with members of the public media?

15. What is the "inverted pyramid"?

16. What are the considerations when planning any publication?

17. Why is proofreading essential and how should it be done?

18. What does "layout" consist of?

19. What purposes do publication timelines serve?

20. How can you tell if your publications are good?

21. Why is "carrying the message" important?

THE IMPORTANCE OF PUBLIC RELATIONS

Community Education is a process that, above all else, relates to the public. It is a public process that responds and reacts to the needs and interests of the people and, in so doing, relates to the individuals, groups, and organizations that make up each community.

Community Education must relate to the public in order to exist. How well or how effectively it relates depends on several conditions:

* commitment to the public relations process
* development of a public relations program
* skill in applying public relations techniques
* ability to use communication tools
* human skills, including flexibility, openness, and personal warmth.

The process and methods of relating to the public are termed "public relations." Public relations, as used in this guidebook, is a positive, all-encompassing approach to bringing the school and the community into a closer relationship for the purpose of mutual understanding, communication, and support.

By breaking the definition into its components, we can get a fairly good picture of how Community Education can promote and use the public relations process. Public relations is a positive approach. Too often, public relations is viewed negatively; it is considered a device to dig out of a bad situation or a gimmick to defraud an audience. Positive

public relations refers to the on-going, active method of initiating and maintaining contact and communication with community members and groups. The positive approach serves a goal of developing support for the schools, which includes support for the Community Education program. A positive approach does not mean that a rosy picture is always presented to the public. Rather, it means that there is a commitment to honesty and openness that exists at all times, not only when everything is going well.

Public relations, as practiced by the community educator, must be active and constant in order to meet the requirements of a positive approach. A public relations program that is reactive and sporadic, one that is used only when there are explanations to be made or only when public support is needed for a particular purpose, will not build the feelings of good will that are produced by active and constant public relations.

It is, of course, much easier to promote a well-run system or program than one which has serious problems. The best way to ensure that communication can be open and honest is to work to see that the school is as good as it possibly can be. If there are weaknesses or defects in any system that serves the public, there is (or may be) a tendency to bury issues, gloss over facts, or tell a partial story. The positive approach includes admitting what is wrong, while at the same time, presenting solutions that will be used to correct the weaknesses.

Public relations is also an <u>all-encompassing approach to bringing the school and the community into a closer relationship</u>. An all-encompassing approach refers to a public relations philosophy of approaching, interacting with, and listening to, all segments of the community. Nearly everything we do--everything that evokes a reaction in others--has a public relations aspect. Our personal style and that of all the people we work with has an effect on the people of the community. The kind of programs we offer, the decisions we make, the services we provide have an effect on the people of the community. And, what we don't do and what we don't do well, has an effect on the people of the

community. Each action produces some reaction in others. It is our job to recognize these important facts and to be continually conscious of the impact on the public of everything we do.

The "public" with which Community Education must build a relationship is not a single entity. It includes everyone in the community--all those we serve, all those we should be serving, and everyone who is in some way affected by the existence of Community Education. The public is not a single body composed of people with similar backgrounds, social and economic statuses, educational achievement and interests. The public is comprised of different and dissimilar individuals. However, there are common bonds that attract people to each other and which produce a common denominator of focus or interest. We share thoughts and communication with others based on these bonds that include age, sex, neighborhood, income, education, religion, living situations, and common experience. Each of these different groups that exist because of some common bond make up the "public." In an all-encompassing public relations program, we must seek out, address, work with, provide for, and listen to each of these individual "publics."

According to our definition, the purpose of public relations is to <u>bring the schools and the community into a closer relationship</u>. There are many reasons why a closer relationship between the schools and the community builds both healthier communities and more effective schools. There are also several reasons why a closer relationship between schools and community is a growing imperative for the future.

The schools are still viewed with awe by many adults in the community. For those for whom school was not a pleasant experience, the school is looked at with dislike or distrust. Even those who found attending school a pleasant and rewarding time in their life, look at the school as remote--almost as if it were a business in which the public should not interfere. Schools <u>do</u> belong to the people. They were created to provide for the education of the children of the people in the community, and they are supported by the community. The right and the responsibility of community members to be involved in what goes on in the schools needs to be stressed by public relations programs. And, the right and the

responsibility of the school to be involved in what goes on in the community need also to be stressed.

In past decades, young people were turned over to the schools at age five and were expected to emerge at 18 fully educated in knowledge, morals, values, and vocational direction or skills. This ostrich view of education has changed drastically, along with the other changes in our complex society. We now recognize that the schools are only a part of the education of the child and that the schools, alone, cannot provide all the positive influences that will result in healthy, functioning, and creative adults. Many people, groups, and organizations play an important part in the development of the child. The family, school, religion, social groups, community organizations, and the community at large all influence the child. No one of these influences has an independent effect on the student. They are so enmeshed and intertwined that it is impossible to attribute a single facet of a child's growth to any one of them. The education system has come to realize that a balance of many sources of influence is needed to provide a young person with the proper skills and attitudes that he or she needs to function as a happy and productive member of society.

The school needs to be aware of what goes on in the community. In order to serve the needs of the youth it educates, it must know about families and the problems facing them, it must be aware how different forces in the community influence the actions and thinking of its students, it needs to be in tune with the problems that its students face and the challenges its students will have to face in the future.

A positive, all-encompassing public relations effort is also a growing imperative for the future. Certain hard facts are confronting education today. Though repeated time and time again by studies, writers, and speakers, many school systems are doing little to prepare for the projected realities of the future. Schools are aware of the effect of declining enrollments, increasing costs and tighter budgets, the galloping inflation rate, and the severe energy crunch with its related costs and problems. Too often, the schools look at these problems in terms of current solutions or long-range plans that extend

for only about five years. Such an attitude causes schools to be only reactive, rather than proactive.

The projected future of education, based not on scare theory or fanciful dreams, is that today's realities of inflated costs, tighter dollars, a smaller percentage of households with children in school, and energy curtailment will result in a different picture of education in the future. We live in the electronic age--in the information age--and the technology that produces and promotes electronic means to understand and deal with life will continue to advance at an ever accelerating pace. Parents are looking for--and demanding--different alternatives in education for their children. They seek the alternatives within the public school system, and if they can't be found there, they seek answers elsewhere.

The structures that traditionally support "the standard American system" are evolving into patterns heretofore unknown. These structures are not undergoing reactive temporary change but are, indeed, evolving into systems that bear the same names but which operate with entirely different rules.

Not only do the majority of women work; more and more they seek career callings that are every bit as demanding and challenging as those formerly pursued mostly by men. Those households with children bear little resemblance to the traditional nuclear family. Infants and young children are entrusted to the care of daycare centers and nursery schools, school age children remain at school after the close of the "regular" hours or they return to their neighborhoods either to babysitters or empty houses. Other changes affect family life--fathers now become primary or co-nurturers, household maintenance is being shared so that the traditional sex-related roles are not being modeled. Many children are being raised in single parent homes, and each child may live with several adults before reacing the age of 18.

We are living in the "global village" created by the technologies of instant communication. We can witness wars and death from famine and momentous, international, political decisions on television while we may not know the neighbor across the hall or across the street.

Much that we have known is changing and changing permanently. Knowledge and learning need to be constantly renewed. According to some theories, information becomes outdated in seven years and needs to be replaced or modified. Even "Back to the Basics" loses definition in the modern context. Which Basics? That of the 30's, the 50's, the 70's? Basick skills and knowledge that would allow an individual to function well in our society are not a constant. The basics--those skills that are the prerequisite tools with which we are able to acquire and share information--are only the starting point.

Education today can give only a taste of the vast knowledge that a person will need to survive. So, well beyond teaching the basics and presenting a taste of some of the concrete facts, education must point out the many doorways of knowledge, must offer the keys to the doorways, and must let the student know that the doors all open on an expanding universe of knowledge rather than on a closed system with defined perimeters.

We will always have a system of education. The future will determine its definition. It may be a complex system of individualized electronic learning, offered at homes, in centers, or in schools. The student body may well be everyone, not just those in certain age strata. Certainly, we have the forerunners of the new system today.

Those charged with education need to overcome their denial, their "today and just a bit of tomorrow" focus, their belief that they, alone, can define education. Educators need to listen to (and talk with) more than the parents, the community, or even education futurists. They need to keep pace with future realities as described by sociologists, political scientists, psychologists, electronic engineers, scientists, and all the other planners and prophets who, without mysticism or conjecture, can foretell the future and its needs. And educators need to use the process of public relations to open these lines of communication.

They need to deliver the message that they are partners in the development of knowledge rather than the mere dispensers and translators of information. They need to work hand-in-hand with the sciences, the

social sciences, and the arts in order that the methods for relaying the vast changes and leaps of knowledge can be developed simultaneously as new insights come to light. In partnership there must be trust. Mutual trust is the backbone of public relations; trust builds cooperation, and cooperation builds trust.

A positive, all-encompassing approach to bringing the schools and the community into a closer relationship for the purposes of mutual understanding, communication, and support is needed by education today, tomorrow, and for all the tomorrows to come.

THE ROLE OF COMMUNITY EDUCATION IN PUBLIC RELATIONS

Community Education plays a vital role in building the system of mutual support between the school and the community. For any public relations process to work, we need visibility, openness, access, and linkages. Community Education is the system with the potential for creating visibility, access, openness, and linkages between the community and the school. Because its function is concrete, continuous, and community-based, it provides a bridge between community members and the educational system. Unlike other bridges that must be built through public relations efforts, Community Education is a natural bridge by which people can approach the school in comfort and with acceptance.

Community Education can carry several important messages to the community.

* The schools belong to the people, and they are for the use of all the people.

* The schools care about the needs and interests of everyone in the community as demonstrated by the many programs, classes, and activities conducted by Community Education.

* Education involves everyone--all ages, all groups, all interests.

* Education is responsive to the community. Community members are consulted as to what measures or means will meet their personal goals.

* Education means more than spoon-fed learning and includes all those things that enrich, expand, and excite.

* The public consists of much more than parents or taxpayers to be courted. The public includes all the formal and informal groups in the community: business and industry, government, social service agencies, religious, political, and fraternal groups.

* Not all education needs to take place within the confines of the school building and that, indeed, the community is the classroom.

* Each person can be both student and teacher. Each person has life experiences to share, and we can learn from each other.

* Community members have a wealth of information and knowledge to share with each other and with the school.

* Learning is joyful, and grading systems are only one way to assess success.

Community Education, the natural bridge with the community, should be used constantly and fully by the schools to foster their public relations goals. Community Education has the capacity, much more than the K-12 program alone, to reach out, touch, gather-in, and provide for the community. Community Education is a low-key, informal, non-confronting link with the community. It provides the access, visibility, openness, and linkages that are essential to the public relations process.

THE PUBLIC RELATIONS PROCESS

Building a positive, reciprocal relationship with the public should be an organized process. The process should be well-thought-out and well-planned and should be developed to meet the specific needs of the individual school district and community.

The process consists of several steps:

1. A decision is made to develop an organized system to communicate with the public. This decision is usually made because of a recognition that improvements can be made either in the quality or quantity of efforts to reach the public.

2. A public relations policy is developed and approved. The policy serves as a statement of commitment of the organization to the community. It describes the intent of Community Education (and/or the entire district) to reach out and listen to the publics that make up the community.

3. An assessment of current and past public relations efforts is made, and a study of possible additional efforts is conducted. The purpose of the assessment is to determine the effectiveness of methods that are or have been used and to learn if all possible audiences are being reached.

4. The goals for a total public relations program are determined. Goals are developed to provide for the best possible communication with each audience identified in the assessment process.

5. Specific objectives that will lead to the successful meeting of the goals are identified.

The objectives outline specifically what is to be done, when it is to be done, who is responsible for the objective, and how the completion of the objective will be verified.

6. The methods or strategies for performing each objective are determined. This part of the process includes the planning of individual steps or tasks for each objective and deciding which person or group will undertake each step.

7. Timelines and budgets are developed. Timelines produce deadlines and thus assure that all parts of the plan will be carried out. Budgets are an essential part of any public relations plan because the cost of providing for communication with the community must be identified in the same way that other program or service costs are identified.

8. Evaluation of the total public relations effort must be provided for. In order to determine if the goals have been met and if the various aspects of the public relations program have been effective, a formal evaluation should be conducted.

Public Relations Policy

The schools, and Community Education as part of the school system, depend on public support. Each school and each Community Education program projects a certain image to the community. Community members interact with the school and react to and form opinions about it. To ensure that relations with the public are positive and that all groups in the community are part of a communication system, a formal public relations program should be developed. Too often, we are only vaguely aware of the public relations purpose or effect of what we do. We are sometimes guilty of an after-the-fact awareness; for example, we may provide a good program or produce an excellent publication, and then say, "That was really good PR for us."

A formal public relations policy gives purpose and direction to public relations efforts. It focuses

attention on the importance of public relations and serves as a statement of commitment. Each school district should develop a written policy for public relations. This policy will provide the support for public relations efforts designed to develop a strong partnership with the community.

Most school districts do have formal written policies that deal with school-community relations. Written policies serve several purposes.

1. They provide the visible proof to both the school and the community that the school is vitally interested in the reaction and support of the community and that it will make positive efforts to develop communication.

2. They provide the authority by which a formal public relations plan can be developed and implemented.

3. They provide a guarantee that public relations will be continual and on-going, rather than a "sometimes" function used when a crisis arises.

4. They provide the legitimacy for devoting funds to the public relations process and program.

Written policies may take several forms. They may be all-encompassing, general statements about the school district's intent to serve the public and to develop appropriate communication with the community. Some public relations policies describe the purpose and the limits of the public relations function. Others are more detailed and, in addition to a philosophy statement, include specific rules and procedures to implement the policy. The strictest type of policy has the effect of law. These policies are adopted as resolutions by the school board and state what must be done.

Because Community Education provides an open channel between the school and community, it should be actively involved in developing or supporting the school district's public relations policy. The Community Education director should become familiar with the policy and, in the absence of one, should work to encourage the administration and the board of education to prepare and adopt a policy statement dealing with public relations.

Community Education departments should also develop their own policies on public relations. This policy should, of course, be consistent with, and supportive of, the policy of the district. In fact, it may be identical with the policy of the school district, or it may consist of those parts of the district policy that apply to Community Education.

A public relations policy for Community Education will help guide and determine present and future decisions that relate to communicating with the public. If the policy is written specifically for public relations as practiced by Community Education, it should include the same elements as a general school district public relations policy. Of particular importance is the inclusion of a Community Education philosophy statement. Community Education cannot exist if it does not reach out to the community. It cannot respond to community needs and interests if it has no planned approach for communication. It cannot help communities become better places to live if it lacks avenues into the community.

The most effective policy is one developed with the help and input of many people. The school district administration and the advisory council should take an active part in determining how Community Education should relate to the public. If the development of the policy is a team effort, you will be assured of agreement and support.

After the policy has been accepted by the council, it should be shown in final form to the administration of the school district for reaction. The policy should also be checked for consistency with the district policy on public relations. If there are no problems, the policy should be presented to the school board for its approval. If the policy serves only as a departmental policy, the school board should, nevertheless, be informed that such a statement exists.

Public Relations Assessment

A major purpose of a public relations program is to develop good communication with the community. We can't know how good the communication is unless we can check to see if the message we want to convey is being heard. Too often, we make assumptions about how we are perceived and received. These assumptions may be true or false--we may decide Community Education

has a positive image in the community or that Community Education is not widely understood--but these decisions are only assumptions and are not based on fact. For example, if we have the support of the administration and if the classes we offer are well attended, we may decide that Community Education is serving our community well. Or, on the other hand, we may offer classes that are not as well received as we would like, and we might then assume that there is little support for Community Education. In order to really know how Community Education is received and perceived, we need to go into the community and find out.

Before we can develop a comprehensive plan for public relations, we need to find out what the current community attitude is toward our program or towards the school. We will want to find out if we are providing the services that are the most needed and if we are serving the interests that are most important. Because Community Education is intended to serve all the people in the community, we need to determine if we are making the best attempts to reach all of the people.

The process of assessment also seeks to answer other questions:

* How visible is Community Education?
* How many people are aware of what we are doing?
* Do community members like what we are doing?
* Are some of the people dissatisfied with what we do?
* How do people find out about Community Education?

Fortunately, the process of assessment is not difficult for community educators. Because community assessment is an integral part of the total Community Education process, the methods for finding information are known to most community educators. The process of finding the answers to questions that relate to public relations is similar to that used for a general needs assessment.

Much of the information that is needed to develop a sound public relations program can be obtained as part of the general needs assessment. When

planning a formal needs assessment, plan also to gather information that will be helpful in developing the public relations plan. A thorough needs assessment that seeks a broad range of responses from the entire community (or from an accurate random sampling of the community) will provide much of the information about how well needs are being met, and interests are being served. Keeping in mind the public relations perspective, you could ask in the survey or interview for perceptions about the program. A variety of questions can provide feedback about the extent of awareness of Community Education. Some of the questions might be:

* Do you know that Community Education sponsors programs for:

  youth_____ preschoolers_____ K-6 students_____

  adults_____ senior citizens_____?

* Do you know that Community Education provides programs for:

  leisure_____ recreation_____ academic_____

  enrichment_____ literacy needs_____?

* Do you know that your tax dollars pay for Community Education through a special levy authorized by the state legislature?

* How pleased are you with Community Education?

  Very much_____Very little.
  5 4 3 2 1

Responses to questions such as these will let you know quickly how visible Community Education is, how aware people are of its function, and whether people like or dislike what Community Education is doing. These responses, together with the responses to questions about individual interests and concerns, should present a good picture of areas in which to emphasize public relations efforts.

Several other methods to determine how well Community Education relates to the public might also be used. If a good effort to evaluate Community Education has been carried out, you will have even more information about how well you are doing. If evaluations from specific programs, classes, or activities

are not positive, you may well determine that some people are dissatisfied. You can also learn a good deal about the effectiveness of different program areas through a formal evaluation in which attitudes of the administration, school board, advisory council, staff, class participants, and community groups are recorded. In addition to finding out how you need to improve Community Education, you will also discover which groups of people (publics) need special public relations attention.

Another method of determining community attitudes is to hold Town Meetings. Town Meetings are gatherings called to address a specific problem or interest. They may be a one-time meeting or there may be several meetings throughout the community. Generally, people will attend a Town Meeting if there is an issue that concerns them. If your program has no issue that will spark interest, you may still expect to attract those who have thought about how Community Education should be run and about how Community Education can improve its image. Small neighborhood meetings--perhaps evening coffee parties--will also provide the information you seek.

Another good method for finding out the feelings of the community about Community Education is to ask the advisory council to poll their constituents. A truly representative council will have access to much information about the perceptions of community members. The council may choose to form a public relations fact-finding task force to discover the strengths and weaknesses of current public relations efforts.

An assessment for public relations purposes should also include a study of the effectiveness of all current efforts to communicate with the public. Attempts should be made to determine how well received and well read the brochure is, and efforts to discover how most people learn about Community Education should be made. Registration forms can include a question about how the participant heard about the program. The general needs assessment can ask how people learn about Community Education. The answers to these questions will provide some measure of which of the current methods used seem to be most effective.

The assessment should also include attempts to determine if all the people in the community are being reached or if some groups are being overlooked.

After all the information has been collected, it is time to organize the formal public relations plan. The goal planning process is the important first step in developing a structured plan for bringing the schools and the community into a closer relationship for their mutual benefit.

Public Relations Goals

Goals are the backbone of any public relations plan. They are the broad general statements about what you wish to accomplish. Goals are based on reality, and though they motivate us to work to the full limit of our capabilities, they also are realistic in terms of time, money, and resources available.

In order to determine what the public relations goals for your program will be, you must do all the background work that is necessary. The information that was obtained in the assessment provides much of the needed background. This information needs to be organized in any orderly system so that judgments about goals can be made.

Many public relations goals are written as they apply to specific audiences or publics. Others may be written in terms of specific public relations procedures or materials. Neither method is better, and some plans combine a combination of the two. What is important is to look at the total picture before writing the goals; that is, each potential audience should be identified, and each possible method of developing positive public relations with each audience should be considered.

The goals you develop are broad, general statements. A goal that has a specified public as a focus might read:

Goal 1: To increase awareness of the school board about Community Education and to gain support for Community Education from the Board.

A goal that has a specific method as a focus might read:

Goal 1: To provide a regular communication with all facets of the community through the development and circulation of a Community Education newsletter.

The following method will provide you with the facts and information you need to develop a comprehensive public relations plan. Three steps are involved. First, all audiences must be identified. Second, all possible methods of promoting good relationships with any group are determined. Third, audiences and methods are matched. In the third step, the use of a planning grid will provide a visual overview of the public relations plan.

Identifying potential audiences

Many publics that you will want to communicate with are common to most Community Education programs. These include:

A. School Board

B. Administration

C. School District staff

D. Bus Drivers

E. K-12 teachers

F. Custodians

G. Community Education staff

H. Community Education teachers

I. The media

J. Local government

K. The business community

L. Social service agencies

M. Churches and synagogues

N. Community organizations

O. Current program participants

P. Prospective program participants

Q. Special Groups

1. Parents of pre-schoolers

2. School age youngsters

3. Teenagers

4. Senior citizens

5. Adults with literacy needs

6. Handicapped persons

The above list may not be complete for your district or your community. You should identify others with special needs or interests that Community Education serves or wants to serve.

Identify public relations methods

So much of what we do in Community Education has a public relations aspect, but we are often unaware of the effect. We need to identify all those activities, procedures, and other types of contact with the community. A brainstorming session of the advisory council will result in many new ideas for approaching the public. If you use such a session, be sure to follow the rules for brainstorming:

1. Set a time limit

2. Don't evaluate or judge any suggestion

3. Build on each other's ideas

4. Encourage everyone to participate.

After general public relations approaches have been brainstormed, a second approach to brainstorming may be used. Using the list of publics that were identified in the first step, brainstorm all possible ways to develop a positive relationship with each one.

Some of the ideas that will emerge from the brainstorming will include:

1. Personal contact with the community

   A. Person-to-person

   B. Speeches

   C. Slide or slide/tape presentations

   D. Interviews

2. Publications

   A. Community Education brochure

   B. Newsletters

   C. Flyers

   D. Community calendars

3. Media

   A. News releases

   B. Feature articles in the newspaper

   C. Radio and TV public service announcements

   D. Radio and TV talk shows

   E. Special Community Education shows

   F. Cable TV

4. Events

   A. Community fairs

   B. Community Education programs and classes

   C. Any special event

5. Procedures

   A. Cooperation with other agencies

   B. Needs assessment

   C. Sending advisory council agenda and minutes to various people and groups in the community

   D. Staff and administration in-service

   E. Awards, thank you's

The above list is also only a partial listing. It may be used to trigger ideas for brainstorming.

Developing the planning grid

In this step, you need to determine what methods will be appropriate for each public. Two questions should be asked:

1. Why should we communicate with this public?

2. What is the best method of communication with this public?

Two lists will be made. Using the school board as an example of one public for which public relations efforts will be made, the list will look as follows:

School Board

Why communicate?

1. We need board support for the budget

2. Board needs to be aware of benefits of Community Education

3. Board could serve as PR agents by carrying the Community Education message to the public

Methods of communication

1. Make presentation at school board meeting

2. Invite board to council meeting

3. Send copies of agenda and minutes to board members

4. Invite board to view community school in action

Similar lists should be made for each public. The information on each list may then be transferred to the planning grid. A copy of the grid with some examples is included on the next page. List all the methods you have identified in across the top of the page. List the audiences down the side. Place a check in the box to identify each audience that a particular activity will reach. Each list--both activities and audiences--should be developed to meet the specific plans of your program.

PUBLIC RELATIONS PLANNING GRID

Public Relations Activities	Copies of Agenda/ Minutes	Invite to Council Meeting	News- letter (general)	Brochure	(Etc.)
School Board					
Administration					
District Staff					
K-12 Teachers					
Custodians					
Community Education Staff					
Community Education Teachers					
Media					
Local Government					
Business					
Social Service Agencies					
Churches/Synagogues					
Community Organizations					
Participants					
Prospective Participants					
Parents					
Youngsters					
Teenagers					
Senior Citizens					
Literacy Needs					
Handicapped					

Public Relations Objectives

Goals without objectives are like trying to build a house without tools. Objectives state, specifically, what is to be done, who is responsible for doing what must be done, and when it is to be completed. Objectives also contain a statement as to how to measure the completion of the objective.

Objectives for the goals given in the earlier example might be:

Goal 1: To increase awareness of the school board about Community Education and to gain support for Community Education from the board.

Objective 1.1: The Community Education director will make a formal presentation to the school board by November 1. Evidence of the report will be included in the minutes of the school board.

Objective 1.2: The Community Education director will send copies of the advisory council agenda and minutes to each school board member each month. Evidence of this action will be included in the director's report to the advisory council.

Objective 1.3: Each advisory council member will meet with a school board member (by January 1) to personally invite him/her to attend an advisory council meeting. Evidence will be the member's report to the board.

Goal 1: To provide regular communication with all facets of the community through the development and circulation of a Community Education newsletter.

Objective 1.1: An advisory council task force on publications will meet bimonthly to determine format and content of the newsletter.

Evidence will be the report of the task force to the council.

Objective 1.2: The director and the council, by September 15, will determine the audiences to receive the newsletter and will decide on method of distribution. Evidence will be a list of audiences and a statement to the council of distribution methods.

The examples listed above are merely suggested objectives. Each objective for your identified goal areas will be developed to meet your own time, staff size, and money constraints. Objectives should be reasonable, achievable, and believable.

Public Relations Strategies

The strategies or methods that will be used to accomplish each objective may be viewed as sub-objectives. The strategies or methods are the steps or the tasks that must be done. The tasks are arranged in chronological order, and the person or persons responsible for each task are identified. Listing the steps or the tasks gives a picture of the amount of work and time that is involved.

The example below suggests how the strategies and methods can be listed.

Goal 1: To increase awareness of the school board about Community Education and to gain support for Community Education from the board.

Objective 1.1: The Community Education director will make a formal presentation to the school board by November 1. Evidence of the report will be included in the minutes of the school board.

Strategies/Methods

1. Arrange for time to appear before board by contacting Chairperson

2. Put together slide demonstration showing Community Education in action

3. Check with neighboring directors for ideas for school board presentation

4. Select three advisory council members to serve on panel to make presentation

5. Set meeting time for panel to get together

6. Practice narrative with slide/tape presentation

7. Hold panel meeting to plan presentation

8. Conduct presentation

The above examples are suggestions for possible activities for Objective 1.1 under Goal 1. Similar lists should be made for each objective for each goal.

Public Relations Timeline

Most work is accomplished because deadlines have been set for its completion. This is true when working with public relations. In addition to the time requirements listed in each objective, specific deadlines should be set for each step in the strategies. A visual representation of all deadlines can be made on a year-long time chart.

PUBLIC RELATIONS TIMELINE

ACTIVITIES/TASKS	Aug.	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.
Newsletter		✓		✓		✓		✓	
Brochure		✓			✓				
Speaking			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Slide/Tape			✓	✓	✓				
Inter-Agency Fair							✓	✓	✓

Public Relations Budget

A separate budget for public relations should be developed. To develop the budget, review the goals, objectives, and strategies. Show costs related to these in two ways: the cost per goal area, and the cost of categories of expenditure, such as printing costs, outside speaker costs, and so on.

If the total expense for the public relations program is more than the money available, you must either cut down costs or find additional money. Councils or school boards may approve additional expenditures if they are aware of the benefits of the program.

Evaluating the Public Relations Program

Evaluation is essential if we are to know if we have accomplished what we set out to accomplish. Each objective has a built-in method of evaluation or evidence of completion. Periodic checks or midpoint evaluations will allow you to check your progress as the year proceeds. If you find that certain objectives are not being met or completed, you may either decide to increase your efforts or to rethink the advisability of continuing with the objective or some of the tasks related to the objective.

A complete evaluation should be made each year. Questions that should be asked include:

1. Is there a greater community awareness of Community Education?
2. Are we reaching more publics than we did before?
3. Have we established two-way communication with all groups?
4. Are our publications being read?
5. How effective are our efforts to spread the word about Community Education?

Once a formal public relations program is established, the evaluation can serve as the assessment for the next year's program. When the results of the total evaluation are compiled, decisions can be made about which aspects to continue, which to drop, and which to modify or expand.

SENDING AND RECEIVING THE MESSAGE

Communication--the sending and receiving of messages--is what public relations is all about. If communication is effective, we hear and are heard. If communication is effective, we understand and are understood. If communication is effective, we respond to and are responded to by the public.

We communicate with many different audiences, and, in so doing, we must use a variety of methods and techniques. Some communication is conducted in an individual, face-to-face manner. Other communication is, of necessity, more remote but equally important. The purpose of the communication determines the methods and techniques to be used.

Personal Public Relations

Probably the most effective method of public relations is personal contact. Each audience that you want to reach will be more affected by individual interaction than by all the various media efforts you make. Brochures and newsletters often are tossed in the wastebasket or are set aside for a "later" that never comes. Face-to-face contact is non-disposable and immediate.

Personal appearance and personal style have a great effect on the image that you portray to the community. Obviously, the manner of dress is determined by what is acceptable in the individual school district. However, to be perceived as a professional educator, one must dress like a professional educator. In a district in which the administration wears business suits, the community educator who wears blue jeans will not have the same credibility as the rest of the administrative staff. Your own good judgment will tell you what is proper. If part of your job is to flood the skating rink, you

would not dress for that job as you would for a meeting. And, when you attend a school board meeting, you would not look as if you had come from flooding the skating rink.

Community Education is a "people" profession, and most community educators are attracted to the field because of their desire to serve the people in the community. The internal feelings of caring and concern need to be projected externally. We are not all blessed with equal amounts of charm and charisma, but each of us has the capacity for courtesy and friendliness.

Remember that first impressions are very important. Rarely do people change their opinion from the one they formed at their first contact with a person. A phone call or coming to register for a class may be the occasion for that first and lasting impression. If the person who answers the phone is rude or seems distracted or impatient, he or she will "turn off" the caller. On the other hand, a friendly voice and attitude will project the message that "you are important."

Though we are in the business of serving the public, we sometimes act as if the public is intruding on our business. In times of pressure--brochure or registration time--we may tend to become frantic and curt. While we may be able to explain to one or two people, "I'm sorry I was short with you yesterday; I was under a lot of pressure," we can't apologize constantly to scores of people. The best approach is to try to be constantly aware of the impression you are making on the other person. Remember to smile, to say a friendly word, and to be patient.

Many people in the community will perceive Community Education according to the way they perceive you. While you needn't always be "on stage," you must be conscious that you play a public role. Efforts to get to know the people in the community are well worthwhile. Get to know the business people, those in the helping and service professions, the working people, the religious leaders, and the person-on-the-street. As you seek their support, offer your support. As you provide information, seek information from them.

One of your many functions will be to educate community members about Community Education and what

it offers the community. You will be asked to address various groups, associations, and clubs. (And, indeed, you should promote speaking engagements in order to carry the message.)

Speaking to a group of people is confronting to many of us. If you feel that this is something that you really can't handle yourself, find someone else who is able to take on the responsibility. Speakers bureaus are very effective and spread the burden of time and energy that are needed to provide this service. Advisory council members and other members of the Community Education staff are well-equipped to explain the purposes and benefits of Community Education. Hints on developing a presentation and giving speeches are included further on in the guidebook.

Internal Public Relations

Public relations are often described in terms of broad audiences: the external audience--everyone in the community outside the work setting; and the internal audience--those with whom we work on a day-to-day basis.

The quality of the relationship with those with whom we work is of primary importance. A humanistic working approach within the work setting not only results in increased productivity but also reaps large rewards in terms of public relations with the community. A well-treated and well-respected staff carry a positive message about Community Education to the public. Teachers--both the K-12 classroom teachers whose space is used for Community Education and the teachers of Community Education classes--custodians, and other school staff are extremely visible in the community. If they are respected, informed, and consulted, they will be positive supporters of Community Education. If they are not informed of what is going on, if they do not have the opportunity for two-way communication, they may well complain to neighbors and friends and thus may undermine many of the positive things that Community Education does.

There are many actions you can take to build good internal public relations:

* Acknowledge those with whom you work with a

smile, a friendly hello, and by being interested in them.

* Take the time to listen.

* Have weekly staff meetings to share information, to gather input and reaction, and to plan work and activities.

* Provide in-service on the Community Education concept and goals to the staff, teachers, and custodians. Seek their cooperation.

* Provide custodians with information about duties and schedules.

* Provide K-12 classroom teachers with information about how the classroom is to be used and discuss any concerns or issues. Assure them that the room will be put back as it was.

* Be aware of conflicts, bring them into the open, and work to resolve them.

* Recognize the importance of social interaction. Find time for social get-togethers. Feelings of solidarity and support are the by-products of shared good times.

* Provide thanks and recognition, both personally and in writing.

* Help all those with whom you work realize the important public relations value of their role.

Finding Others to Carry the Message

Public relations is a synergistic process. Small efforts produce large results, and positive contact with one person may influence many other people.

Sound public relations efforts with the internal public--the administration, K-12 staff, Community Education staff, K-12 teachers, Community Education teachers, custodians, and others with whom we work on a daily basis--will not only create a sense of good communication within and between groups, but will be carried into the community at large.

In fact, all our personal efforts of public contact will have a widespread effect. A good relationship with the school board, class participants, business and community leaders will be an important part of reaching our goal of bringing the school and the community together for their mutual benefit.

Three specific methods for utilizing others to carry the message are described below: (See Community Involvement Target Topic)

ADVISORY COUNCILS

Advisory council members are, perhaps, the best vehicle for spreading the word about Community Education to the community. Advisory council members have access to all the information about the Community Education program and have a view of the total picture. They carry this message to the people and groups they represent and serve as ambassadors for Community Education. To insure that the best possible information is being transmitted to the community by the council, it is imperative that the council be well trained in the concept and philosophy of Community Education. Council members should have full knowledge of decisions about the program and should be made aware of difficulties and problems.

BLOCK CLUBS

A powerful method for developing communication is the use of Block Clubs. Block Clubs are groups of residents that share a common geographical area. Block Clubs may be formed on square blocks, on homes facing each other across a street, on homes that back to each other across alleys, in apartment buildings, or on county roads. Their purpose is to bring people together to share interests and to discuss common concerns. The community educator maintains contact with the Block Club and uses it for an exchange of information. News about the school and the Community Education program is discussed at the club meeting, and the interests and concerns are relayed to the community educator by the Block Club.

KEY COMMUNICATORS

A less direct, but equally effective, method of communication is the Key Communicator system. In

this system, a person identified as the Key Communicator acts as the liaison between the school and the community. Information about the school or the Community Education program is presented to the Key Communicator either by phone or at a meeting of Key Communicators. She or he, in turn, carries the information to the people he or she is to contact. Individuals in each neighborhood know who their Key Communicator is, and can relay problems or concerns to the Community Education director through the Key Communicator. It is very important that the Key Communictors take part in an in-service program that not only explains their role, but which presents them with an understanding of Community Education.

Writing

Public relations is a process of developing positive relations with various groups through communication. We have two major methods for communicating with the public--writing and speaking. Effective writing and public speaking are not, for most of us, in-born talents. But they are skills that we can learn, can become comfortable with, and can become competent at.

Probably the most serious cause of problems in writing is poor organization and unclear thinking. We take up our pens and attack the blank paper with little idea of what we want to say or what we need to say. The first and most important step in writing anything is to plan what we are trying to convey to the specific reader. Decide what message you want to transmit and what information you are trying to get across. Put yourself in the shoes of your readers. What would they like to hear? What do they need to know?

Organize in your mind, or in an outline, what you want to say. Be able to articulate what you want to say in your writing. If you can't tell another person what it is you want to say in your writing, your writing will be unclear. Fuzzy thinking begets fuzzy writing.

Before you begin writing, you should determine, in addition to the purpose, the style and tone you will use. Style and tone may differ depending on the purpose and the audience for your publication. If you are writing research results or a report for the school board, the style will be academic and

written in the third person--"it has been decided," "the advisory council determined," and so on. In this case, the tone will be formal. If you are writing for a newsletter, the style will be simpler and less academic, and the tone will be informal and friendly. Most writing in Community Education tends to be informal and friendly.

Keep in mind the following suggestions to improve your writing:

1. Write at the level at which your readers read. The average American reads at the ninth grade level. Most people feel better reading at one or two levels below their maximum The Gunning Fog Index is a good measure to determine at what level you write. The Index works as follows:

   A. Select a sample of about 100 words.

   B. Count the average number of words in each sentence.

   C. Count the number of words with three or more syllables.

   D. Add the average number of words in each sentence to the number of words with three or more syllables.

   E. Multiply the sum by 0.4. The product is the approximate reading grade level.

2. Avoid education or other jargon. It is difficult for us to eliminate jargon because we are not aware that so much of our vocabulary is tied to our profession. Even words such as "needs assessment" may need to be paraphrased so the general public can understand what you mean.

3. Keep most of your sentences short. Vary the length of sentences to avoid monotony. Use a variety of simple, compound, and complex sentences for interest.

4. To insure a friendly tone, write the way you talk.

Public Speaking

Public speakers are made, not born. Each time you speak before a group, you become more comfortable and, therefore, improve your speaking ability.

The first and most important thing to remember when you are preparing to give a speech is that you do have something important to say and that you have been asked because you do know your subject well. Your audience is there to listen about Community Education, and you hold the information they want to hear.

Time and effort spent preparing a presentation pay off. You may feel the need to write your entire speech out. If you do write it, then reread and practice until you can get away from the sheets of paper. A speech should sound spontaneous and should not be read. And, though you may memorize your remarks, try to make them sound as if the thoughts were occurring to you at the moment. To free yourself from the written page, underline key points and phrases in colored ink. Then, during your speech, you need only to drop your eyes to your paper on occasion. The best method, of course, is to speak from an outline on three-by-five cards.

Plan an interesting and stimulating opener. You needn't start with a joke or a funny story. You have undoubtedly heard speeches in which the presenter got everyone's attention by telling a joke that didn't relate to anything he or she said later. Plan to capture your audience with something that will rouse their interest or provoke their thinking--and that relates to your topic. Probably the most important reason for a catchy opening is to provide you with the comfort that will take you through the initial two minutes. A certain amount of tension and stage fright is natural, and it actually serves to make your presentation more exciting.

Present your material in a logical manner. Tell the audience what points you are going to cover and summarize the points you have made at the closing. Try to end with closing remarks that are as stimulating as your opening statement. If you end on a high note, the audience will respond with enthusiasm.

Remember the importance of eye contact during your speech. Different speakers use different methods. You might sight on three or four faces scattered around the room and direct your attention to them. Or, you might move your eyes from person to person. Try not to be confronted or put down by the person who falls asleep or the person who talks to the person next to him or her while you are speaking. Concentrate your effort on those who are your active audience and remember that, since you can't read minds, you don't know why some people aren't paying attention. Perhaps the sleeper has been up all night or the rude talkers treat all speakers in this manner.

You can use a variety of techniques and aids to make your presentation more interesting. If you are asked to make a long presentation, you may wish to seek helpers to share the burden. Adults have an effective attention span of about 20 minutes. If you are asked to fill more time than this, consider setting up a panel. Panel members can each take on a sub-topic and present it to the audience. Discussion between panel members adds interest to the presentation, and the audience is more likely to ask questions of a panel than of an individual speaker.

Visual aids also provide an additional focus for your presentation and enhance your presentation. Visual aids include charts, graphs, newsprint lists, transparencies for overhead projectors, photographic slides, film strips, and movies. All visual aids should be well done and should be applicable to the topic.

PREPARING SLIDE PRESENTATIONS

Slide presentations are an effective accompaniment for a speech on Community Education. Pictures of your program in action bring additional reality to your remarks.

Don't bother with putting together a slide presentation unless you are willing to take the time to see that it is really good. First, you must decide what aspects of your program you would like to depict and if they lend themselves to photographic representation. The color slides that you take must be good: they must be clear and in focus; they should

be uncluttered and not showing too much or too many people at once; and they, preferably, should include action. If you don't have a good photographer available to you, find or hire one.

After you have the proper photos, arrange them in the order in which you will use them. Practice your talk, using the slides. Have something to say that relates to each slide. If you run into awkward transitions, either change your speech or find additional photos to help make the transition.

TOOLS FOR COMMUNICATION

The Public Press

The public newspapers--city, suburban, rural, and neighborhood--have great influence and wide readership in all communities. The newspapers are a major media for getting information to the people, and community educators need to know how to work with and through the public press. You should know how and when to approach the press and how to write news articles and other press releases.

HOW TO APPROACH THE PRESS

The news media, like other professions, has standards and rules by which they operate. Newspapers are in business to present news that will cause people to buy the newspaper. Newspapers print news that is of interest to members of the communities they serve and, by so doing, hope to develop and maintain a wide readership. However, it is the right of the newspaper to determine what news, or what portion of the news, it wants to print. Therein lies the conflict.

The press is accused of seeking items that are sensational or issues that are controversial to the exclusion of articles that will promote public knowledge or well-being. Those who attempt to publicize and gain public support for their programs through the news media are accused by the press of being single-minded and self-seeking. There is some truth in both sets of accusations, and successful relations between the press and those who want to be served by the press are a matter of developing understanding and seeking compromise.

A first step in the process of building a strong relationship with the press is to get to know

the newspaper people. Depending on the size of the newspaper and the community it serves, you may meet with the editor, a general reporter, or tne education reporter. Prepare for the meeting. Know what you would like from the paper and what you can offer the paper. People of the press do not react favorably if they think you are seeking to use the paper for publicity or free advertising. Newspapers are in the business of providing news.

At the meeting, your goal should be to determine the method for submitting news items to the paper that relate to Community Education and/or the schools. Your second goal should be to inform the newspaper people of the kinds of news they might expect to receive from your department.

The newspaper will be happy to inform you of its requirements and rules for submitting articles and information. You should ask:

* The names of newspaper persons to whom copy should be submitted

* The names of reporters who will be assigned to school and Community Education coverage

* Deadlines for submission of articles and news releases

* The form required for articles and news releases.

A positive, mutually supportive relationship with the press has great value for both the newspaper and Community Education. Inform the press representative with whom you meet about Community Education and your role in it. Discuss with him or her what programs or activities you think might be newsworthy. Find out what kinds of news articles the paper might be looking for from you. You will want to check out the possibility of having feature articles on Community Education from time to time. Also, although papers are primarily interested in printing news, some papers carry announcements of Community Education programs and activities as a service to their readers. Some papers, particularly local weeklies and neighborhood papers, welcome a regular column on Community Education.

Another step toward building a strong relation-

ship with the press is to establish certain ground rules by which you will operate. Find out the policy of each newspaper for submitting news. The larger papers may choose to send out a reporter to gather information, or they may want you to prepare a fact sheet from which a reporter will write the copy. Some papers will want you to write the news articles, retaining for themselves the right to edit the copy.

Too often people who seek to use the newspapers for their own publicity purposes flood the news desk with press releases that have little or no news value. To avoid presenting copy that will wind up in the wastebasket, discuss with the newspaper representative with whom you meet what he or she considers news or valuable material. Editors are very willing to help people discriminate between newsworthy and boring copy.

Agree to be available to reporters and other newspaper people at all times. Communication with the press is a two-way process. You can't expect the press to be receptive to your material if you are only selectively cooperative. Newspapers will approach you when they get wind of a story. Meet with them and give them the facts they seek. (One note: If you want to say something "off the record," don't!) If a critical issue or controversy arises that you know will become public information, call the newspaper people and tell them. By letting them in on the ground floor, you will show that you are serious about cooperative efforts. Also, give the press not only your work number, but also your home number. Newspapers don't always work a "nine-to-five" day, and they may need to verify information with you.

Be fair and don't play favorites when you send out press releases. If there is more than one paper with which you deal, send releases to all. If you have exciting or special news, either call a press conference or alert all the papers. Should there be material of a special nature, for example, a feature article, offer the information to the papers on a rotating basis.

The newspaper and its staff can be great supporters of Community Education. Building a good working relationship with the press is never a one-shot effort; it is a continuing dynamic effort.

Invite the press to advisory council meetings, send copies of your brochure to them, invite the press to special events, and, most importantly, develop a personal relationship.

WRITING FOR THE PRESS

Writing for the press requires specific skills and techniques. Even the most practiced and secure writer needs to learn the specialized approach that newspaper writing requires. If you have had little experience in this field, ask newspaper people to provide an in-service training for you. Other people in the school system and the community would welcome such a training session. You might invite other community educators from other school districts to participate in the training.

The training will cover, in greater depth, some of the suggestions and ideas considered below:

News articles: News articles are written in what is called "the inverted pyramid." The most important information is included in the lead sentence and in the lead paragraph. Subsequent paragraphs contain information that is less important but that elaborates on the lead paragraph. The inverted pyramid has long been accepted as the best method for writing news. It was developed out of the knowledge that many people quickly lose interest in reading about too many things in depth. The reader skims the large amount of printed matter in the paper and selects those articles that have personal appeal. The inverted pyramid attracts attention, gives the most important information first, and then spells out the details further on for those who have the interest to continue reading. The theory is that all information after the lead paragraph could be lopped off, and the reader would still have the gist of the story.

Lead paragraphs answer the "five W's and an H"--who, what, where, when, why, and how. It is not necessary that all six are addressed in the first sentence; however, they should be attended to in the first paragraph. Too often, beginning news writers try to construct a sentence that covers all the ground, and the result is a sentence that is too long and too confusing. Your goal in writing the first lead sentence should be to be interesting and clear.

A couple of additional hints for writing leads are: Don't start the article with a date, "On January 5th..." or "Last Tuesday..." The date is the least important. Don't start with "the" or "there" because these words tend to cause you to write in the passive voice. "The meeting was held..." Don't start with the name of a person making an announcement. The content of what is being announced is more important than who is making the announcement. "Superintendent Jones announced that fifth grade basketball is to be eliminated," is not nearly as good as, "Fifth grade basketball is to be eliminated according to an announcement made by Superintendent Jones."

Use short words and short sentences when writing news articles. The average sentence length should be from 17 to 20 words. You can use longer and shorter sentences for interest, but basically, remember to keep sentences short. If a sentence runs on and on, start over. Use a period and capital letter and break the long sentence into two sentences.

Use concrete and specific words. A news article is not an essay, and the reader wants to learn the facts. As mentioned before, avoid academic or large words and all professional jargon. Use action verbs to add interest to your article and to convey your thought accurately.

When the article you plan to submit is completed, check it for accuracy and for style. If necessary, rewrite. Submit the finished article to the paper in plenty of time to meet its deadline.

Form for news articles: Check with each newspaper for its requirements and guidelines on news articles and news releases. Most newspapers have style sheets that outline the rules and procedures for submitting copy. The style sheets list rules for capitalization, spelling, use of names and titles, and abbreviations. By following the rules of the style sheet, you may help assure that your copy is printed. The less rewrite that papers have to do, the more they feel encouraged to print your news.

News releases: News releases are the short articles or announcements that provide information on special programs, classes, or events. Most newspapers require a standard form for news releases.

Although there is some variation, the following standards generally apply:

1. Prepare the copy on white 8-1/2" by 11" paper. At the top put your name, the name of another person to contact for more information, the name and address of your program, and the Community Education phone number and your home phone number.

2. Also at the top of the paper put the date the release is being sent and the date you want the newspaper to release the story or article.

3. Begin the article about one-third of the way down the page. (The newspaper will use the white space above to write the headline and to make notes.)

4. Always double space.

On the following page is an example of a news release.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

For Further Information: August 15, 1981

Contact

Newtown Heights Community Education
2222 South Spring Street
Newtown Heights, Minnesota 11111

John Jones, Director 666-6666 (work)
555-5555 (home)

Mary Smith, Ass't. 666-6666 (work)
444-4444 (home)

Text:

"Newtown Heights--New Days--New Ways" is the theme selected for this year's Newtown Heights Community Fair. The Fair is to be held Saturday and Sunday, August 22nd and 23rd, in the Mall of the Newtown Shopping Center. Fifty community organizations will set up booths and be at the Fair to tell what services they offer to the community.

The fifth annual Community Fair, coordinated by Newtown Heights Community Education, will feature two concerts by the Newtown Heights High School Band, one at 11:00 a.m. and the other at 2:00 p.m. on each of the days of the Fair. Several refreshment booths will provide food for those attending.

* * *

Radio and Television

The same principles that you use in working with the press should be used in working with radio and television people. Make efforts to introduce yourself to the director or manager. Sit down together to determine ways in which you can work together. Find out all the possibilities for using these media.

There are many ways in which you can use these media for communicating with the public.

Radio and television talk shows: You can, perhaps, arrange to be a guest on a talk show. Many stations provide programs in which community events are discussed.

Radio or television feature: Talk to the local station director or manager to see if there is interest in a special on Community Education. The show could consist of a talk, a panel, or if television is the media, a film could be made of a program in action. The station will help you set up the show.

Cable TV: More and more local cable TV stations are available for community use. If this is the case in your area, see about getting a regular spot for the school and/or Community Education.

Public service announcements: Each station is required to devote a certain amount of its air time to public service use. Short public service announcements are given each day, and you should take advantage of this free service. The amount of time given for your use (the spot) seems small--30 or 60 seconds. It is amazing how much information can be given in this short time. A radio or television public service spot can be used to tell the community that it is registration time, that a special event or class is coming up, or to promote some special service. The station will have a standard form for submitting public service announcements--called PSA's. Follow the form required and make your writing very concise and concrete. The announcement should catch the listener's attention and should excite interest.

An example of a public service announcement is on the following page.

PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT

For Further Information: August 15, 1981

Contact

Newtown Heights Community Education
2222 South Spring Street
Newtown Heights, Minnesota 11111

John Jones, Director 666-6666 (work)
555-5555 (home)

Mary Smith, Ass't. 666-6666 (work)
444-4444 (home)

The fifth annual Newtown Heights Community Fair will be held next Saturday and Sunday, August 22nd and 23rd, at the Newtown Shopping Mall. Fifty booths displaying information on community services will be set up. Representatives of the organizations will be present to discuss their services.

The Fair is coordinated by Newtown Heights Community Education. This year's theme is "Newtown Heights--New Days--New Ways." Entertainment is planned several times during the course of the Fair. The Newtown Heights High School Band will play two concerts each day, the first at 10:00 a.m. and the second at 2:00 p.m. For those who want to make a day of it, and eat at the Fair, several refreshment booths will be available.

* * *

Publications

Publications produced by Community Education departments serve a vital public relations purpose. The brochure that describes the classes and activities sponsored by Community Education are often the primary way that the community learns about Community Education. Newsletters that are distributed periodically to community members may carry the major news of what is going on in the school and the community to many households. Flyers advertising special programs and events serve as a visible reminder that Community Education is providing programs of interest for the community.

The skills needed to produce a publication can be acquired by anyone who takes the time. Like most other efforts, putting together a publication is done according to a plan--one step at a time. A publication plan is essential if the publication is to serve the purpose for which it is intended.

A publication plan will include the following elements:

1. The purpose of the publication
2. The audience for whom the publication is intended
3. Format and design for the publication
4. Cost
5. A plan for distribution
6. An outline of the mechanical and technical parts of the publication--writing, proofreading, layout, art, printing
7. A timeline
8. A method for feedback and evaluation.

Each of these elements is important in any publication. Because brochures and newsletters are the two major types of publication produced by Community Education, we will examine each one separately and in some detail.

BROCHURE

The Community Education brochure is the publication that lists all the Community Education offerings. Many brochures are complete publications that go well beyond describing class offerings. They may be used to explain the Community Education concept, to promote other classes and programs offered by other community agencies, to list services available in the community, and to encourage community involvement in the K-12 program.

Each brochure should carry your own Community Education logo. If you do not have this identifying symbol, select or create one to place on all your publications. Your logo says to the community, "This is Community Education." Each publication should include the name of the director. Listing other members of the staff and the names of people on the advisory council is important. It lets people know that Community Education is provided by many people, and that it is not a one-person show.

Purpose: You should be able to describe the purpose of your publication. Is the purpose of your brochure to advertise Community Education classes to the entire community? Is your purpose larger than just promoting classes? Are you trying to promote the Community Education concept? Or, might you want to produce a cooperative brochure in which you describe many community events offered by a variety of community groups? Perhaps you want your brochure to also serve as a directory of community services. Maybe you want to prepare a brochure to advertise programs or classes to a special group such as senior citizens or adults with literacy or math needs.

Audience: The overall plan for your public relations program will include a listing of your identified publics. You must determine which audience or audiences will be the focus of your publication. A publication of general appeal will be too broad for a specific audience. You will lose the impact of centering on a particular group, and the publication may contain more information than the reader is interested in. Similarly, a publication which has a narrow focus may be a turn-off or annoyance if it is received by people to whom it does not apply. Their reaction may be, "Why are they sending me this?" The next time a publication comes from Community Education, they may just toss it in the wastebasket

without reading it, on the assumption that there is nothing of interest for them in it. Therefore, plan your publication carefully for those to whom it is to be sent.

Format and Design: Each publication that you send out should be visually appealing and should be presented in a logical order. People first judge a brochure or newsletter by how it looks. Does it look messy or cluttered? Is the color attractive? Is there something to catch your eye on first glance?

Remember that there are three types of reader: the 30-second reader who only glances or flips through; the three-minute skimmer who looks through to see what catches the eye; and the 30-minute reader who takes the time to read most of the text. If your publication is interesting, the 30-second reader and the three-minute reader may be converted to 30-minute readers.

There are several keys to making a publication more attractive.

* Use plenty of white space. White space is any part of the page on which there is neither copy nor art work. You will be reminded of the appeal of white space if you think back to the last time you went to a library or bookstore to get a book on a technical or academic subject. You may first have skimmed the table of contents and then flipped through the book. If the book was wall-to-wall copy, you probably rejected it and selected another with more white space. Too much copy tends to turn people off; at first glance it just seems to be too much reading. Even the most delightfully written copy will not get read if there is nothing to attract the reader's attention.

* Use art work for an attractive and interesting publication. Anything that is not text is considered art work: photographs, drawings, boxes, lines, shading, and other design elements that provide for interest or that focus the reader's attention. Art should add to the copy rather than detract from it.

* Decide on the size of your publication. You will want room to say everything you have to say without crowding. Also, you will want to have room for white space and for art work to add interest.

* Have the type large enough for everyone to read. The normal aging process results in the inability of the eye to change focus with ease. Large, or at least regular size type, is needed for a good share of the audience who read Community Education publications. Too often, we consider reducing the type just a bit to make everything fit. A wiser answer is to either reduce the amount of copy or add extra pages.

Cost: The cost for producing a Community Education publication varies greatly, depending for the most part on the quality and the size. Effective publications can be produced in a variety of places--the school district's print shop, vocational schools, and so on. Although it is considered good practice to give your trade to local businesses, you may find that their prices are just not competitive with prices in a neighboring community. If this is so, you will have to weigh the advantages of keeping the good will of the local business people compared with the advantages of the cost saving. If you do get a lower bid outside the district, ask the local printer if he or she can meet the price. If not, at least you will have informed him or her of the reason for taking your business elsewhere.

If you decide to use a professional offset process, there are several things you can do to keep down the cost. Different weights of paper cost different amounts. Perhaps you can manage with a lighter weight paper. Also, most artistic additions add to the cost. Photos and screening or shading certain areas for emphasis increase the cost; however, their appeal may be worth the extra money. Colored paper and colored ink add to the cost of the brochure but may be worth it in terms of visual appeal. The greater proportion of the work that you can do yourself will keep the costs down. If you do your own layout and art work, rather than paying someone else to do it, you will save.

The amount of copy affects the cost. Obviously,

you will want to describe each class, program, or service so that its purpose is clear to the reader. Occasionally, we get carried away and write much more than is necessary. Careful and clear writing will keep the amount of copy to the optimum.

The method of distribution also influences cost. School children sometimes carry the Community Education brochure home. There are many problems with this low-cost method of distribution. Only about 25 percent of the households in a community have children in the public schools. Also, beyond the sixth grade, there is much less chance that the youngster will take the publication home. School children bring such a deluge of material home--homework past and present, art work, classroom news, notes from the school and so on--that the "important" Community Education information may not receive the attention you think it deserves. On the other hand, if your desire is to promote an after-school activity program, the hand-carried brochure may be the best. And, it is the cheapest.

Most Community Education brochures are mailed bulk rate with the school district's non-profit organization permit. This method of mailing assures that almost every household in the community receives the brochure. Each publication is mailed to "resident" or "postal patron" and, thus, it is not necessary for you to spend a good deal of time making up a mailing list.

Two additional methods of distribution that are relatively inexpensive are to include inserts in the local newspaper or the local "shopper." Keep in mind, that promoting Community Education through a newspaper insert limits your audience to the subscribers. A "shopper" reaches more people, but it may not be as well read as the newspaper. However, once a practice is established of distributing program information in these ways, the community will come to expect to find the news in these media.

Writing: The Community Education brochure is the advertisement for your classes and program. The class and program descriptions should be concise and clear, and the class should sound interesting. Vary the style of the class description. Don't start them all with, "This class will..."

It is very important that the description matches what actually is going to occur in the class or program. Bad will erupts if class participants feel they have been misinformed. To avoid the possibility of misleading the reader, be very sure that you know what the class will cover. You may do this in one of two ways. Meet with the instructor and discuss the course content and method. Then write the description from your notes. Or, ask the instructor to write the description--that you will edit to be consistent with other descriptions. If you write what the course is about, have the instructor check what you have written to be sure that you both agree. If you edit a description written by the instructor, have him or her react to the edited copy to assure that you have not changed the intent of the class. If there are special requirements for the class, either prerequisites or costs, be sure to include this information in the description.

Try to write creative titles that are both catchy and accurate. Check for consistency between the title and the description that follows. If the title is "cute," but misleads, it creates the potential for trouble. If the title is precise, but dull, you may lose potential participants. If you call a class "Getting It Together," the fast reader may be so enticed that he or she will stop and read. However, if the class is entitled "Learning to Live Alone," the reader will have a better idea of what is being taught. The body of the copy can then go on to explain that this is a class dealing with the mechanics of living alone. Of course, you do want to attract interest. Perhaps the better way would be to title the class "Getting It Together: Learning to Live Alone."

If you are doing a joint publication with another agency or agencies, work closely with them to insure consistency of form. Representatives of these organizations should be involved in the planning from the outset, and each group that is cooperating should be clear as to its responsibilities for the publication. Only one person should be the major editor. However, you can seek guidance and suggestions from many other people.

After all the copy has been written, it is time for editing. Go through and eliminate any unnecessary words. Keep your copy lean. At this point it is a

good idea to test the clarity of the copy. Present the material to two or three other people and ask them if they understand the description for each class or activity. If you find that you have to verbally explain what is written, you can be sure that the copy is not clear. Don't fool yourself into thinking that your test reader is a little dense. If one of your readers doesn't understand, you can bet that many others won't either.

Proofreading: Proofreading is essential. Often its importance is learned the hard way by having to reprint or hand change a date on a brochure. Attention to the following proofreading guide should prevent most problems and errors.

1. Check for dates, times, places, names, and addresses. If you say "Thursday, the 22nd," be sure that the 22nd is on a Thursday. If you tell where a class is being held, be sure you are accurate and exact. Don't say "auditorium" if it could be one of two different auditoriums.

2. Proof for content that has been left out. Check that each item says "what," "when," "where," and often "who," "why," and "how."

3. Do a numbers check. If you plan 11 classes, check to see that you have 11 classes and that you didn't omit one.

4. Proof several times. Ask a friend to help.

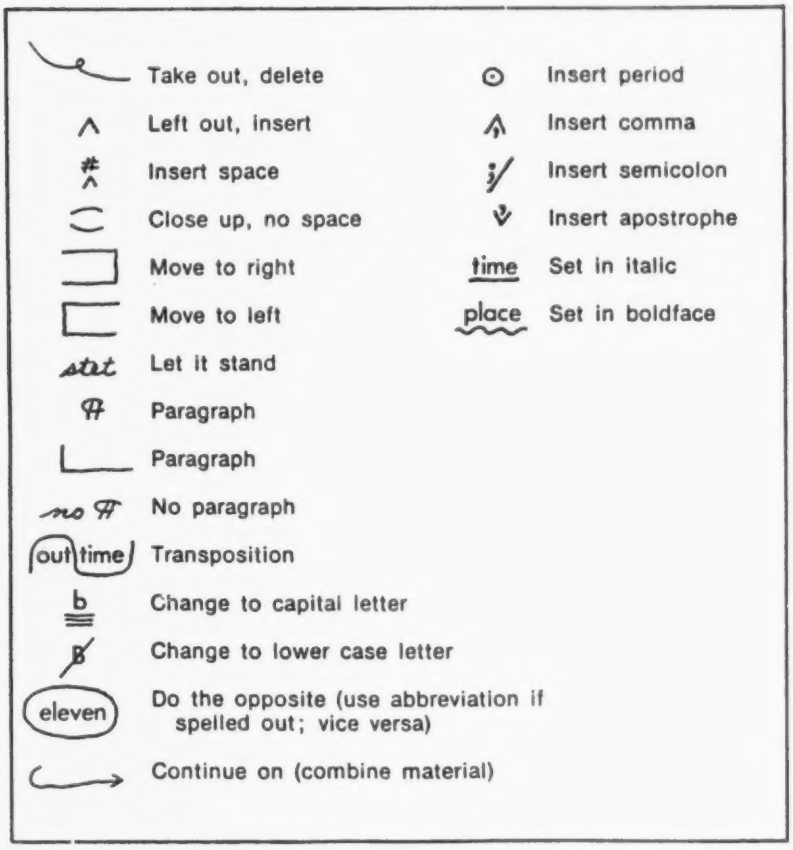
5. Use your dictionary and a style book for help in punctuation. If it looks wrong, it probably is.

6. To catch typographical errors, read the copy backwards, word-by-word. By doing this you won't get caught up in the flow of the narrative and fail to see transposed letters.

7. Become familiar with proofreading symbols. Use them for your own use and for the typist and typesetter.

The following two pages include standard proofreading symbols and an example of how they are used.

PROOFREADING SYMBOLS



2e. Typical copy editing symbols.

PROOFREADING EXAMPLE

not long after, when I was 6, I found myself on the other side of that fence. Mama and Daddy were always in financial ~~straights~~, and they finaly ran our family ship on the rocks. They had to sell the house and the kids were moved to the orphan home. we ate bits of stale bread dunked in milk or oatmeal or grit. The garbage we ate was a delight, ~~moreover~~, compared to the treatment we recieved from Miss Day and her staff.

Not long after, when I was six, I found myself on the other side of that fence. Mama and Daddy were always in financial straits, and they finally ran our family ship on the rocks.

They had to sell the house and the kids were moved to the orphan home. We ate bits of stale bread dunked in milk, or oatmeal or grits. The garbage we ate was a delight, however, compared to the treatment we received from Miss Day and her staff.

Layout: Layout is a term that means placing everything that goes in the brochure (or any other publication) in its proper place. Before doing the actual layout, you must:

1. Decide what information goes where

2. Plan the white space

3. Decide what art work (photos, drawings, boxes, borders) you will use to add interest

4. Decide on length and size of headlines.

After you have made these decisions, you can prepare the "dummy." A dummy is a mock-up or model of the brochure. Use sheets of paper the same size as the finished brochure for laying out your program.

On the dummy you indicate where you want your "flag"--"Garden City Community Education." The "flag," the major title of your organization, is often mistakenly called the masthead. The masthead is that part of a paper that gives information as to publisher, editor, and so on. Each brochure should also include your own logo, as well as your flag.

On the dummy you will mark off areas for the copy after determining the logical and proper placement. Also, on the dummy, indicate where art work goes, including photos, drawings, and border designs. After you have placed all the material on the dummy, check for logic, balance, appeal, and readability. If there are problems, shift things around. This is the time to make changes. After the proofs come back from the printer is an expensive time to change your mind.

Once your copy is the way you want it and the dummy has been prepared, it is time to get ready to print the brochure.

Art Work: Art work enhances and provides interest in your publications, and its use should be planned carefully. The art work needs to be as good as the writing. The following suggestions should help you understand how to use various kinds of art in your newsletters, brochures, and other publications.

* It is well worth your while to purchase books of clip art. Clip art is just what its name implies. It is a book of drawings and sketches done by professional artists depicting all sorts of people and activities. These drawings and sketches are printed on large sheets of white paper and then bound. The purchaser clips those drawings he or she wants and uses them to illustrate classes or programs.

* If you, or a local artist, draw illustrations for your publications, be sure that they are of top quality. Pencil sketches will not reproduce. Use opaque black ink for clarity.

* A variety of border designs can also be purchased for your use. These borders adhere to sheets of plastic and can be transferred to your final copy with the use of a stylus. Alphabets and numbers, in a variety of styles, are also sold as press type.

* Photos can add appeal and can personalize your publication. Photos can be "cropped" to eliminate distracting backgrounds, focus interest, or be a certain size. If your photo is to be reproduced by offset printing, draw a box around the area you want to be printed with a grease pencil.

Printing by Mimeograph Method: If you are going to mimeograph, the final copy is typed directly on mimeograph stencils. The material is to be typed the way you want it to appear. When you made the dummy, you decided whether to use one, two, or more columns. Divide the stencil into the appropriate column widths, and type the copy to fit.

After typing the stencils, add your art work in the space you have reserved. Clip art can be used with stencils, and it is recommended that you use this purchased art, rather than sketching yourself. However, if you have someone with good art skills available, by all means use that person. Add other elements that will enhance your design, such as boxes and borders.

If you are mimeographing, remember the design suggestions discussed earlier. The only way to make major changes on a stencil is to retype. Leave plenty of white space and check each page to see if it is interesting. Single space the copy but double space between paragraphs. Triple space between the end of one class description and the headline for the next class or activity.

Printing by Offset Press Method: The world of the professional printer may be a mystery to the person who is not experienced in working with it. One of the reasons for the mystery is that the vocabulary--the jargon--seems foreign. And the many steps in the process of printing, from submitting your copy to receiving the finished product may seem complicated.

However, the language can be translated and thus understood, and the steps in production are logical once they are explained. Words used by printers will be explained as we go along. The production steps will be discussed in chronological order.

Probably one of the most important things to remember when using a private printer is that you can do much of the work yourself, you can do some of the work yourself, or you can turn the entire job over to the professional. We will proceed through the steps from start to finish.

1. Meet with the printer to discuss your brochure. Explain what you want, show examples of previous brochures and seek suggestions. Show him or her the dummy you have prepared and discuss costs, including paper, typesetting, preparing photos, layout, art work, and printing. Discuss possible economies and determine what part of the process you can do. At this time, give him or her your logo, your flag, and any other art work that will be a constant in your publication.

   Determine the style of type you will use. Conflict exists as to whether serif type (that with feet on each letter) or sans serif (that without) is better. Serif type tends to hold the eye to the page, thus increasing attention. Sans serif allows

the reader's eye to move across the page more quickly. The decision is yours; however, most publications are done in serif type. Have the printer help you select the type. He or she will know what is most common or most accepted.

When you have your meeting with the printer, determine a timeline. Tell the printer your deadline, determine the amount of time he or she will need, and on what date you should submit your copy so that the production of the publication will meet your deadline.

2. The next major job is to have the copy that you give to the printer in perfect form. This does not mean that there cannot be an occasional typographical error, but such errors should be clearly corrected on the copy you submit. Proof very carefully. If a printer makes a mistake in typesetting the copy, he or she bears the cost of the changes. If you make the mistake, you bear the cost.

   No matter how good your printer is, don't count on him or her to catch or correct your mistakes. Be particularly careful about punctuation. Each left-out comma or semicolon takes a space on the line, and if it is omitted on your copy, the entire paragraph may have to be reset. The responsibility is yours.

   Have your copy very neat. Double space to reduce the chance that a line will be lost. Typesetters may read for the sense of what they are typesetting, but they are not familiar with your program and may set something that doesn't make sense. Of course, if they miss a line, it is their fault. However, you bear the burden of the extra time that it will take to make the correction.

   Give very clear instructions to the printer. The copy that you want to be single column width should be marked as should the double column or across-the-page width.

The typesetter should have your dummy--on which you have clearly indicated where each item goes--to help avoid errors.

3. After the copy is typeset, it is returned to you for proofing. If the printer has done a good job, all--or most--of the typographical errors will have been discovered and changed. The final approval is up to you, so you must proofread very carefully. Always have more than one person do the proofing. The previously suggested tip for reading the copy backwards is very good. One of the major errors in typesetting is the transposition of letters, and these are often overlooked in the proofing. Words like "advisroy" are common. Carefully check dates, numbers, addresses. Mistakes in these are often common. Check for words and lines left out. Check for missing paragraphs. The typesetter may have been interrupted and then started again in a different place.

4. After you have proofed the copy, it is given back to the printer for corrections. When these corrections are made, you will have a chance to look the typesetting over for the final time.

5. At this stage, the work is up to the printer. Working from your dummy, he or she will do the "paste up." In this process, the typeset copy, the head, the photos, and the art work, are pasted to the "boards." After the paste up is completed, the final art work is done--lines separating columns, borders, and other design elements. A sheet of semi-transparent paper is then taped to cover and protect the "camera ready" brochure. Camera ready means that the publication is in final form, ready to be photographed and printed.

6. The completed boards are presented to you for your approval. If you make any changes at this time, it will increase the labor costs you must pay. The changed copy must be removed from the board, the changes must be typeset, and then repasted. In many cases, this means moving a good deal of the

copy around. On the other hand, you must not let an incorrect brochure go out. This is why it is so important to pay strict attention at the earlier stages of the printing process.

7. With your final "OK", you are going "to press." Your work is done except for distribution.

Timeline: A timeline will keep your brochure on target. The following suggested timeline can be adapted for your own use:

Brochure Timeline

Completed	Task	Date	Responsibility
1. _____	Planning Select Instructors Number/types of classes Select class sites, dates, times Number of photos Art work Submit for bids, if outside printer	____	_____
2. _____	Preparation Order kind/type of paper Request outside articles Write course descriptions Take photos	____	_____
3. _____	Article deadline	____	_____
4. _____	Copy Ready Type Proof Edit Retype "Screen" photos	____	_____
5. _____	Dummy Make model Place articles Place photos Determine art work	____	_____
6. _____	Typeset or make plates	____	_____
7. _____	Submit to printer	____	_____
8. _____	Galleys back Proof Resubmit to Printer	____	_____
9. _____	Post office Check re: mail permit/ bulk mail Re: Bundling procedure Requisition check for postage	____	_____
10. _____	Final check Proof Go-ahead	____	_____
11. _____	Back from printer	____	_____
12. _____	Fold/staple	____	_____
13. _____	Mail/distribute	____	_____

Feedback and Evaluation: There are several ways in which you can obtain feedback about the effectiveness of your brochure.

* Class participants can be asked how they heard of the course

* The community-wide needs assessment can include questions about the extent of readership of the brochure

* A formal evaluation of the entire Community Education program can address the question of the effectiveness of the brochure.

Other methods for evaluation of the brochure or any other publication include:

* The services of an independent outside evaluator can be secured. He or she can provide critical judgment of writing, layout, design, and use of art work.

* The advisory council can take time to evaluate the brochure in terms of appeal, audiences reached, and cost.

NEWSLETTER

Newsletters are one of the best methods for getting information to the public. An important feature of newsletters is that you have control of the content, the timing, and the cost. The public newspapers are very important for getting news to the public, but because they serve the entire community, you must take your chances on receiving space in the paper, and you may have to wait some time before the newspaper has the time or space to do a feature article on Community Education.

The steps in preparing a newsletter are similar to those discussed in the previous section. You must be able to define the purpose of the newsletter, just as you defined the purpose of the brochure, and you should know the audience for which it is intended. Many of the tips suggested for producing brochures apply to producing newsletters. There are, however, some additional suggestions that will be helpful in publishing a newsletter.

1. Decide on the size of your newsletter. Figure out how much copy you will want and plan the size accordingly. Newsletters are commonly printed on 8-1/2 by 11 paper, and as this stock is readily available, the costs are minimized.

2. Be sure to include your logo--your designated symbol or design--in your newsletter. The newsletter should also have a title that is used consistently. This title, called the name plate or "flag," should appear on the front page of the newsletter.

3. Use your best writing skills when writing your newsletter. The community may judge your professionalism by the quality of the writing. A newsletter can have a more folksy tone than when writing for the public press.

   The inverted pyramid style is also important for newsletters. The information about the 30-3-30 reader holds true for readers of newsletters. Your goal is to capture the interest of the 30-second and the three-minute reader.

   Newsletters provide the opportunity to talk about the program, and about personalities. You can present an overview of what Community Education is doing for your community, and you can describe the services that you offer. Newsletters are a chance to "blow your own horn," but in an honest, factual, and non-bragging way.

4. Learn to write good headlines--called heads--for your articles. The public press prefers to write the heads for articles submitted to them; your newsletter will carry your own heads.

   Headlines catch the eye and invite the reader to read the article. Headlines should be short and accurate. To insure that the head really tells what the story is about, reread the copy and then summarize what it is about in one sentence. Then rewrite the one sentence, eliminating all unnecessary

words. Leave out all articles--the, an, A--and most adjectives. The head should include, in order, noun, verb, and object. If your second writing leaves you with a head that is still too long, rewrite again. Headlines should fill the space over the article. If your head is too long, shorten it. If it is too short, expand it.

Headlines should include an action verb and should tell what the story is about. Which of the following heads would be read?

"School Board to Meet Monday," or

"School Board to Discuss Sex Education."

Obviously, the second head will cause the reader to read on.

Another rule in writing headlines is to avoid passive verbs. An active verb is more exciting. For example, "Community Education Award is Given to John Jones," is not as good as, "John Jones Receives Community Education Award."

5. Newsletters look best if the body of the newsletter is printed in one style of type. Headlines can have more variety, but you should limit the number to two or three. All caps (capital letters) are the hardest to read. A style that combines caps and lower case letters uses caps for the first letter of all words except the articles and small prepositions. This style is also somewhat hard to read. The preferred style of headline is called downstyle. In downstyle, only the first word and the proper names in the headline are capitalized.

6. The layout for a newsletter is done in the same manner as the brochure. The major article in your newsletter should go in the upper right-hand corner. The eye moves across the page from left to right, and the left side holds the eye.

7. Photos that are to be used in newsletters should be selected with the same degree of care as those that go into the brochure. Be sure to include a caption for each photo and identify the people portrayed. Don't put in a picture that does not have accompanying text or a reference in the newsletter.

8. Each publication should have its own timeline to assure that no step in the process is overlooked and to prevent deadline panic.

   The following page is a suggested timeline for a newsletter.

Newsletter Timeline

Completed	Task	Date	Responsibility
1. _____	Planning	____	_____
	Number of articles Length of articles Number of photos Art work		
2. _____	Preparation	____	_____
	Request outside articles Write articles Take photos		
3. _____	Article Deadline	____	_____
4. _____	Copy Ready	____	_____
	Type Proof Edit Retype "Screen" photos		
5. _____	Dummy	____	_____
	Make model Place articles Place photos Determine art		
6. _____	Typeset	____	_____
7. _____	Sumit to printer	____	_____
8. _____	Galleys back	____	_____
	Proof Resubmit		
9. _____	Final check	____	_____
	Proof Go-ahead		
10. _____	Back from printer	____	_____
11. _____	Fold/staple	____	_____
12. _____	Mail/distribute	____	_____

CARRYING THE MESSAGE

Public opinion is formed in all the corners of our communities--in apartment hallways and on street corners, in barber shops and in churches, in classrooms and in board meetings, over back fences and from podiums. Each community is a thinking, feeling body of many parts, wanting to hear and be heard and to know and be known.

The system of total communication that is known as public relations provides the way to affect and effect public opinion. Public relations provides the method for speaking to the community and for listening to the community. Public relations is the vehicle for understanding the community and for bringing information to the community.

We should remember that "carrying the message" is not only important, it is also fun. Historically, the most trusted servant has been selected to deliver the message. As servants of the publics we serve, our responsibility to reach out to them is a token of trust. Traditionally, the child with a high level of enthusiasm is the first "to tell." In Community Education we often have the fun of being the first "to tell"--about programs and events and "the news." Carrying the message is, of course, a two-way process. We speak, but we must also listen; we tell, but we must also hear; we form public opinion, and we are formed by public opinion.

The responsibility for bringing the schools and the community into a closer relationship for their mutual benefit is a grave one, but it is also challenging and exciting. Community educators and Community Education advisory councils who are aware of the serious need for an organized public relations program and who are skilled in public relations methods and techniques can provide a great service, not only to Community Education but to the school district and the entire community.

WHAT DO YOU KNOW NOW?

(The questions at the beginning of the guidebook are repeated below. Now that you have read and studied the materials, you may wish to go back over the questions again to check your knowledge and understanding of the main ideas contained in the guidebook.)

1. What purpose does the public relations process serve?

2. Why is public relations important to the future of education?

3. Why is Community Education the natural vehicle for the public relations efforts of the school district?

4. Why is it important to have a formal policy for public relations?

5. What are the components of an assessment for public relations?

6. What background work is needed in order to write public relations goals?

7. Who are the "publics" that Community Education serves?

8. How does the planning process apply to setting up a public relations program?

9. Why should a public relations program be evaluated?

10. How does your image and the image of your staff and council affect public relations?

11. What is "internal" public relations and why is it important?

12. How can other groups carry the Community Education message?

13. What are the major problems that people face when they write?

14. Why is it important to develop a personal relationship with members of the public media?

15. What is the "inverted pyramid"?

16. What are the considerations when planning any publication?

17. Why is proofreading essential and how should it be done?

18. What does "layout" consist of?

19. What purposes do publication timelines serve?

20. How can you tell if your publications are good?

21. Why is "carrying the message" important?

GLOSSARY

WRITING TERMS

active verb
a verb whose subject is shown performing the action of the verb; for example, "she writes."

edit
to review material for grammar, style, or logical sense when preparing it for publication.

inverted pyramid
news-writing style in which each succeeding paragraph contains less important, supportive material.

lead
the opening paragraph or paragraphs of your news story (pronounced lēd).

passive verb
the subject is the receiver (object) of the action of the verb; for example, "the tree was struck by lightning."

stylebook
a listing of style guidelines.

TYPE TERMS

boldface
type that is thicker or darker than normal.

downstyle
headline style in which only the first word and proper nouns are capitalized.

justified type
flush left and right margins, similar to newspaper columns

ragged right (left)
column of type in which the right (left) edge is uneven, similar to ordinary typewritten.

serif
type with fine lines projecting from the main strokes of a letter.

sans serif
unadorned letters, or type without serifs (fine lines projecting from the main stroke of the letter).

LAYOUT TERMS

art work
drawings, charts, photographs, symbols, tones; everything except text and headlines.

camera ready
stage when all line art, headlines and body copy are pasted down on pasteup sheet, and photos and continuous-tone art work are labeled for offset printing.

column
rectangular section of a page, usually containing typed or typeset material; or, regularly appearing feature article written by a special writer or devoted to a special topic.

clip art
commercial, ready-to-use art you clip and paste on pasteup sheets for offset printing or trace for mimeographing.

dummy sheet
paper with columns and margins marked, used for laying out your pages (also called layout sheet).

gray page
a page of type without bold headlines, photographs, art work, or properly placed white space; the small, black letters against your white paper make the page appear gray.

head
same as headline.

keyline
to align your type, art work, and headlines on your pasteup sheets so they are straight and parallel.

layout
the plan or design for your pages.

masthead
list of your organization and its address, your editorial staff, frequency of publication, and subscription rates.

nameplate
the identifying line of display type (and sometimes art work) on the first page or cover of your newsletter which contains your newsletter's name.

transfer letters
cut-out or rub-off letters printed on clear acetate sheets, used in offset printing.

white space
the unprinted areas on your pages, including margins and space between paragraphs.

PHOTO TERMS

caption
descriptive matter for photographs, or the heading of a chapter, pages or section.

crop
to remove or not use parts of a photograph.

crop marks
lines drawn on edge of photo or art work to indicate which areas you wish to use.

halftone
a technique of representing tones or shading through the use of varying size dots created by photographing the item to be halftoned through a fine screen.

screen
breaking a photo or piece of continuous-tone

art work into varying size dots by using a half-tone screen; or, breaking a solid ink area into dots of equal size and spacing by using a Ben-day screen, thus producing a lighter tint of the ink.

RESOURCES

Community Education - How to Series, Public Relations Handbook by Diane Russell, Pendell Publishing Company, 1976, Midland, Michigan. A short booklet covering the basics of public relations for Community Education programs. Very readable and easily put into service.

Keys to Community Involvement Series by Northwest Regional Educational Library, National School Public Relations Association, 1978. A series of short (approximately 20 pages) booklets dealing with specific issues in the area of working with the public.

The School and Community Relations by Leslie W. Kindred, Don Bagin, and Donald R. Gallagher, Prentice Hall, Inc., Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, 1976. A thorough book dealing with specific items involving public relations.

SCRIPT (School/Community Relations Innovative Program Techniques) by the Arizona Department of Education and the Arizona School Public Relations Association. An excellent handbook of ideas, examples, and processes to utilize to carry out a successful program.

Successful School Communications by William Goldstein and Joseph C. DeVita, Parker Publishing Co., West Nyack, New York, 1977. This book is basically geared for the administrator with suggestions for staff, other internal communications, and dealing with the public.

National School Public Relations Association, 1801 North Moore Street, Arlington, Virginia 22209. An excellent resource for audio-visual and printed material in the area of public relations.

Minnesota Chapter of The National School Public Relations Association, 6200 West Broadway, Brooklyn Park, Minnesota 55428. An excellent resource for public relations assistance in Minnesota.